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Land Use Issues Receive Prompt Attention In Senate

As chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and a member of the Land Use Leadership Council, I am in a unique position to continue to work for important new land use reforms to improve the quality of life for all Michigan citizens.

As chair, I consider it my responsibility to act promptly on the unanimously supported recommendations from the council's report that will make significant improvement in revitalizing our urban areas.

I am pleased that the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee has now acted on six significant council recommendations by passing bills that will provide for better coordination between local planning and zoning commissions (HB 4284), allow for more urban cleanups and job creation (SB 805, 806) and stimulate the protection of open space under Planned Unit Development (HB 4666 - 4668).

This past week, Senate Bills 805 and 806 passed the Senate. I am excited about both bills because of the dramatic impact that they can have on urban cleanup and job growth. These bills will redistribute \$75 million from the Clean Michigan Initiative for local brownfield cleanup and redevelopment projects. The money will be equally divided into a new revolving loan program and the existing grant program established under CMI. The money provides for new loans and grants to local units of government that have identified economic development plans and forged partnerships with the business community.

This legislation will help us leverage valuable state cleanup dollars with a local commitment of private sector help. It also allows for a continual reinvestment of the new revolving loan fund with the loan payments made by a local unit of government.

Our formula for making our urban areas more livable includes cleaning up sites of contamination and creating jobs. Leveraging and replenishing state dollars to conduct more cleanups, which will make our cities more appealing and thereby helping to preserve our cities, our farms, and our open space.

Patricia L. Birkholz
State Senator
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For Confirmation Purposes, please call: 517.373.3447